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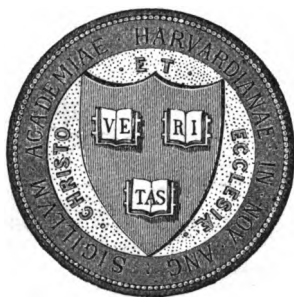
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United Bowmen of Philadelphia —

(ORGANIZED A. D. 1828).

WRITTEN BY

Robert B. Davidson

ROBERT B. DAVIDSON, Jr.

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Charles P. Hayes,

Philadelphia
HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF THE

UNITED BOWMEN OF PHILADELPHIA.

INCEPTION AND FOUNDATION OF THE CLUB.

O TITIAN R. PEALE, the last survivor of the founders of the Club, on the eightieth anniversary of his birthday, at a banquet given by ♥ Charles P. Hayes, made the following statement, viz. :—

“In 1825, after returning from Long’s Expedition to the Rocky Mountains, feeling the want of out-door exercise, and disliking billiards, tenpins, &c., a few friends joined in choosing archery before breakfast, and a walk in the country.

“We soon found that a systematic organization was requisite for healthful amusement. A few books by British toxophilites fixed our plans on their models and experience.”

Carrying out these ideas six young men of social disposition and scientific proclivities, in the spring of the year 1828 agreed to associate themselves together as a Club. The nature and objects of the Club are set forth in the preamble of the Constitution adopted by them, viz. :—

PREAMBLE.

“Archery has been exercised from the most remote ages of antiquity, and, in modern times, has always been considered a useful and polite accomplishment, affording in its practice a vigorous and beneficial exercise conducive to health and recreation. With these impressions, we, the subscribers, have associated ourselves together under the name and title of THE UNITED BOWMEN OF PHILADELPHIA; and, for the better advancement of our views, mutually pledge ourselves to be governed by the following Constitution and Regulations.”

ARTICLE I.

"The Association shall be styled The United Bowmen of Philadelphia, and consist of persons above the age of twenty-one years, and the number of members shall not exceed twenty-five."

The shooting, as well as all business of the Club, was to be conducted in a systematic manner.

ARTICLE VI.

Of the Recorder, as in the Constitution, reads: "He shall register all hits in the target-book that may be made at practice, field, and prize meetings, collect such articles relative or appertaining to archery as may be practicable, and deposit them in their proper books or cases as they may require, and report from time to time such information to the Club as he may deem of sufficient importance."

"THE REGULATIONS

"Provide that the meetings for practice shall be held weekly, beginning on the first Saturday in May and ending on the last Saturday of October; that a field-day shall be held on the last Saturday of each month, when a prize, not exceeding three dollars in value, shall be shot for, to be awarded to the member whose hits shall value the highest. At field and practice meetings the distance was to be at the discretion of the captain of the target, not exceeding, however, one hundred and twenty-five yards, nor less than sixty yards, and the number of rounds fourteen." The usual distance was eighty yards.

The targets were of forty inches diameter, consisting of five concentric circles: the inner one eight inches in diameter, gilded; then red, white, black, and light blue, each circle increasing eight inches in diameter.

The value of hits was: in gold 9, red 7, white 5, black 3, blue 1, being in inverse ratio to the areas of the respective circles.

On the second Wednesday in September of each year a prize-meeting was held, when fourteen rounds were shot at the distance of eighty yards, and four prizes awarded. The

first (the Club bowl) was awarded to the member whose hits valued highest, the second (a silver cup of the value of fifteen dollars) was awarded to the member whose hits were next in value, the third (a silver cup of the value of ten dollars) to the hit nearest the centre, provided that was not made by the winner of the first or second prize, in which case the person having the hit next in approach to the centre would take it; the fourth was awarded to him whose hits were sixth in value, provided he was not entitled to the third prize. This prize was a silver arrow originally taken by Elhanan W. Keyser, and presented by him to the Club, to be shot for annually, and retained by the winner one year. The bowl was also the property of the Club, and was held by the winner only one year, and he was to put additional ornament, according to the design of the Club, to the value of ten dollars. The Club appended a medal to the bowl, on which was inscribed the name of the successful competitor, with the date. A gold breastpin was given to each winner of the bowl, and a silver pin in form of an arrow-head to the winner of the fourth prize.

Each member provided himself with a bow, quiver, arrows, belt, guard, and glove, together with the uniform adopted by the Club from time to time. He had also his mark and colors, with which his quiver and arrows were painted and his equipments marked, so as to readily designate the owner.

On the shooting-ground an archer's lodge was erected, in which was an "ascham," or closet, with lock and key, for each member to keep his equipments in.

The Club consisted originally of six persons, viz.: Franklin Peale, Titian R. Peale, Robert E. Griffith, M. D., Samuel P. Griffiths, Jr., Jacob G. Morris, and Thomas Sully; the latter, however, never took an active part in the Club. In the same year other members were added, and in all more than fifty persons have united with it, yet at no time has the full number of twenty-five active members existed. Resignations, removals, death, and expulsions (for black sheep occasionally got into the flock) kept the active list down to about sixteen to twenty.

The first shooting-ground was Bush Hill, a large, open piece of ground used for military parades and drill when

General Thomas Cadwalader commanded the volunteers of this county. Bush Hill was then quite out of town, and remained open for some years after that period, and was the site from which the Meteorological Committee of the American Philosophical Society and Franklin Institute flew their kites. It was on the south side of Fairmount avenue, in the neighborhood of Twentieth street, and is now covered with buildings. In 1833 William Norris, Jr., of locomotive-engine celebrity, was elected a member, and he cordially invited the Club to shoot on his grounds, situated on the north-west side of Turner's lane west of Broad street. The United Bowmen continued to shoot at Pembroke for several years, and some of the prize-meetings were held there, attended by hundreds of the friends of the Club. On one occasion (1836), while the usual practice meetings were held at Pembroke, the annual prize-meeting was held in an opening in Mrs. Kohne's woods, a short distance to the eastward. At that time a very general invitation was given, and about two thousand persons were present. The lane from Broad street to the Ridge road was nearly filled with horses and carriages. The annual prize-meeting of the Club was considered by the friends of the members as one of the most enjoyable and interesting events of the year, and was looked forward to with great pleasure.

On field-days and prize-days the members wore the uniform adopted, which consisted at first of a light sporting cap of black bombazine, an iron-gray jacket bound with black braid, and white pantaloons. After a few years (in 1836) this was changed to a single-breasted frock coat with standing collar, of *drap d'été* Lincoln green in color, and trimmed with gold lace, with a gold arrow worked on the collar; a straw hat covered with the same material, and turned up on the left side with three black ostrich feathers couchant; white pantaloons, guard and belt of black patent-leather, with a large gold buckle; from the belt depended grease-box and tassel. This was a very pretty, picturesque, and appropriate dress, as

"Hard by the shady greenwood tree
 • The merry, merry archers roamed."

At the meetings for shooting the targets were arranged in pairs, facing one another at the distance of eighty yards. The archers were drawn up in line, and at the command of the captain strung their bows. They then in turn advanced a short distance in front of the target and shot three arrows. After all had finished the line was again formed and the archers marched *en echelon* to the other targets, when the captain of the target marked the hits and the shooters picked up their arrows and shot back to the other targets, thus making "one round." Seven rounds were shot and then a recess taken, after which seven rounds more were shot, and the captain added up the hits and values and announced the result.

After enjoying the hospitality of Mr. Norris for some years The United Bowmen, thinking good nature should not be imposed upon, and wishing to be a little more independent, rented part of a dairy-farm, now in the Eastern Park, and formerly the country-seat of our fellow-member Jacob G. Morris, known as "Fountain Green." Here the Club erected a more convenient lodge, the design of fellow-member □ Ambrose W. Thompson, and continued to shoot on that ground until 1840 or '41, when for a year or two they rented a shooting-ground on Nicetown lane, near the Germantown Railroad. Here it was found that rain could fall on the second Wednesday of September, and the spectators were dispersed by a shower from the prize-meeting of 1842. It was then determined to construct a tent which should protect the families of the members from rain. Franklin Peale, one of the original members, took this in hand, and designed and constructed a large pavilion with wings. In the centre was a tall pole surmounted with the flag of the Club, and in the front, extending the whole length, were poles at short distances, twenty-four in number, with the flags of the different members at their heads. This was a beautiful as well as convenient arrangement. The pavilion was so constructed that the whole of it, with the exception of the poles, could be packed up in a chest easily carried by four men and stowed in the lodge. This pavilion was erected by the members before the arrival of the company, and taken down and packed up after the shooting was over.

The prizes for the day were displayed on a table standing in front of the centre of the pavilion. The recess after shooting seven rounds was passed in pleasant chat or listening to our associate O Titian R. Peale telling stories of his adventures in the wilds of the Rocky Mountains and his encounters with the "grizzlies," and afterwards with his experiences on the United States Exploring Expedition under Lieutenant Wilkes, and also in imbibing the pure, cooled extract of cow furnished by our landlord, John Ambler. Here we stayed until driven away by lager beer, a brewery having taken the place of the dairy, and a rowdy set, who stole many of our equipments from the lodge, was substituted for the quiet, respectable family of the Amblers. This ground is now covered by the subsid-ing reservoir in the East Park, and all traces of the shooting-ground are obliterated. The Club then removed at the invitation of Dr. William Camac ♀, a member, to his place on the Germantown Railroad, and a few members continued to exercise there in 1857 and 1858. This ground, like Bush Hill and the Turner's lane country-seats, is now covered with buildings.

In 1859 the Recorder reported "no ground, no shooting." In addition to the weekly and prize meetings of the Club the United Bowmen celebrated the 4th of July with a picnic. We started from town at 9 o'clock A. M., shot at the Poppinjay until some fortunate archer made a hit in the head, when that part of the sport ended, and Rovers were substituted for the regular target practice. It was arranged beforehand what each member should take, and some of James Prosser's excellent green-turtle soup was always a favorite part of the repast. A "hail storm" was prepared at high noon, made after the best Old Virginia recipe, and was partaken of by the members, but never to excess. On these occasions the flying of Chinese kites and throwing the "boomerang" were added to the sport, some good specimens of birds and dragons having been furnished by Frank-
lin Peale and the boomerang having been brought by Titian R. Peale O from one of the savage islands of the Pacific. The Club was greatly indebted to these two of the original mem-

bers for devising and furnishing amusement and instruction. William Norris, Jr., ♦, too, entertained the Club handsomely while they shot on his grounds, furnishing Stein-wein, Hochheimer, and other drinkables during the repast, and, in the evening, fireworks. A salute of thirteen guns was fired at noon from a small brass cannon and fire-crackers exploded. After the inroad made upon "Sherwood" by lager beer, the United Bowmen enjoyed the hospitalities of M. W. Baldwin Δ at his country-seat at Wissanoming on several occasions. Shooting took place in the morning of the 4th of July, but no salute was fired at noon and never was a "hail storm" known there, no alcoholic drink being allowed on his premises, but there was abundance of sherbet, &c., &c.; and when dinner came our host, acting on the principle that if there were fourteen rounds in the field there must be an equal number at the table, provided accordingly. There was no recess after seven rounds at the table, as in the field, and so some of the members were obliged to let out their belts from time to time until dinner was over and they could be removed entirely.

Besides the meetings for shooting there were business meetings held once a month, always at the houses of the members, and these sometimes concluded with fork exercise, enlivened by song and story.

Music, painting, art, science, architecture, medicine, law, and commerce were all represented in the Club, and a better feeling probably never existed than among the members of The United Bowmen of Philadelphia.

Those happy days have now passed; few of the members remain, the last of the original members, ○ Titian R. Peale, having died March 13th, 1885, in the eighty-sixth year of his age. The tastes of the present generation seem to be different from those of the past. Base ball, fast horses, and boat races have taken the place of archery. The city has so extended in the last fifty years that there is no place within a convenient distance to be had for archery if the taste remained. The Club has moved from place to place, its members have dropped off from time to time and their places have not

been filled, and now, after the lapse of sixty years from its commencement, its remains, like General Mercer's, have been gathered together and are deposited, as a final resting place, in the hall of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and *Sic transit gloria Sagittariorum Conjunctorum.*

MARS (σ),

Alias R. B. DAVIDSON (aged eighty years),
a member for fifty-two years.

PHILADELPHIA, September 22d, 1888.

MEMBERS OF CLUB OF UNITED BOWMEN OF PHILADELPHIA
AND YEAR OF ELECTION.

FRANKLIN PEALE, 1828.	} Original.	FRANCIS BLACKBURN, 1834.
TITIAN PEALE, 1828.		JOHN F. FRAZER, 1835.
ROBERT E. GRIFFITH, 1828.		ROBERT B. DAVIDSON, 1836.
SAMUEL P. GRIFFITHS, 1828.		HENRY F. HEBERTON, 1836.
JACOB G. MORRIS, 1828.		JAMES C. BOOTH, 1837.
THOMAS HAYES, 1828.		HENRY ECKFORD, 1839.
WM. H. W. DARLEY, 1828.		JOSEPH H. TROTTER, 1841.
CEPHUS G. CHILDS, 1828.		FRANCIS A. FISHER, 1841.
JOHN HAVILAND, 1830.		EPHRAIM HAINES, 1841.
JOSEPH McILVAINE, 1830.		FRANCIS HART, 1841.
ALEXANDER KRUMBHAAR, 1830.		ISAIAH V. WILLIAMSON, 1842.
JOHN NEAGLE, 1830.		SAMUEL WETHERILL, 1843.
JAMES N. BARKER, 1830.		WILLIAM HENRY TROTTER, 1847.
JOHN K. KANE, 1830.		J. ROSS SNOWDEN, 1848.
LEWIS KRUMBHAAR, JR., 1831.		M. W. BALDWIN, 1848.
THOMAS F. BETTON, 1831.		JOHN H. TOWN, 1849.
ELHANAN W. KEYSER, 1832.		ROBERT CORNELIUS, 1849.
JOHN P. GRIFFITH, 1832.		ISAAC F. BAKER, 1849.
HENRY W. C. BOHLEN, 1832.		E. OTIS KENDALL, 1849.
MORDECAI L. DAWSON, 1832.		EDWARD S. SANFORD, 1849.
JOHN RIEHLE, 1832.		JACOB SINNEFF, 1849.
ROBERT M. PATTERSON, 1832.		CHARLES P. HAYES, 1851.
WILLIAM NORRIS, 1833.		WILLIAM C. FOWLER, 1851.
GEORGE B. HALL, 1833.		CHARLES H. SMITH, 1852.
HARVEY D. SELLERS, 1833.		JOSEPH W. MILLER, 1852.
AMBROSE W. THOMPSON, 1834.		JOSEPH B. TOWNSEND, 1853.
WILLIAM H. WINDER, 1834.		GEORGE F. DUNNING, 1853.
MARK M. REEVE, 1834.		WILLIAM CAMAC, 1855.
THOMAS SULLY, 1834.		

